

Message Text

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CAPETOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LI, SF

SUBJ: PRESIDENT TOLBERT ON DIALOGUE WITH SOUTH AFRICA

REF: MONROVIA 1159

1. PRESIDENT TOLBERT CALLED ME TO THE EXECUTIVE MANSION ON MORNING OF FEBRUARY 28. ACTING FONMIN OKAI AND ASST MINISTER FOR PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS HOLDER ALSO PRESENT.

2. PRES TOLBERT SAID HE WISHED TO EMBARK UPON A PROGRAM OF MORE FREQUENT PERSONAL MEETINGS BETWEEN US WITH THE VIEW OF DISCUSSING INFORMALLY WIDER RANGE OF ISSUES OF INTEREST TO OUR TWO COUNTRIES. HE SAID THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT HE COULD BE OF CONSIDERABLE HELP TO US IN AFRICA AND THAT WE COULD BE OF COMPARABLE HELP TO HIM. ON THIS OCCASION HE PARTICULARLY WISHED TO EXPLAIN HIS RECENT MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER. TOLBERT THEN PROCEEDED TO OUTLINE THE RATIONALE OF THE MEETING IN MONROVIA ALONG THE LINES OF THAT CONTAINED REFTEL. HE PARTICULARLY UNDERSCORED THE LAST MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FORD IN WHICH HE HAD EMPHASIZED THE NECESSITY FOR ALL MEN OF GOOD WILL TO DO THEIR UTMOST TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS IN THE WORLD.

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HE SAID HE HAD SENT THE TEXT OF HIS STATEMENT ON HIS MEETING

WITH VORSTER TO PRESIDENT FORD. IT WAS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF HIS CONCERN FOR HUMANITY THAT HE HAD DECIDED AT THIS TIME TO SEE WHETHER DIALOGUE WITH SA GAVE ANY PROMISE OF SUCCESS.

3. HE SAID HE BELIEVED VORSTER TO BE SINCERE IN HIS DESIRE TO PROMOTE DIALOGUE AND TO AMELIORATE THE SITUATION VIS-A-VIS BLACKS, WHITES AND COLOREDS IN SA. TOLBERT SAID HE IS CONVINCED VORSTER DESIRES CHANGE FOR THE BETTER BUT AT THE SAME TIME HAS MANY POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF HIS OWN AT HOME TO OVERCOME. TOLBERT FELT IT EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO BREAK THE SHELL OF SOUTH AFRICAN ISOLATION AND TO EXPOSE SA TO CONDITIONS IN OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND OTHER COUNTRIES WITH SIZABLE MINORITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID IT WAS AN EYE OPENER FOR VORSTER WHEN STEPHEN TOLBERT EXPLAINED THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE MESURADO GROUP OF COMPANIES IN WHICH WHITES AND BLACKS WORK HARMONIOUSLY TOGETHER AND WHERE HIS WIFE SERVES AS SECRETARY OF THE WHITE PRESIDENT OF THE COMPANY. VORSTER REPORTEDLY AGREED TO TOLBERT'S INSISTENCE THAT THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IN SA MUST PROCEED PARI PASSU AMONG BLACKS, COLOREDS AND WHITES TO LIVE HARMONIOUSLY TOGETHER.

4. ON RHODESIA, TOLBERT SAID HE BELIEVED VORSTER WAS SINCERE IN HIS STATEMENT THAT SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE WOULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM RHODESIA ONCE VIOLENCE CEASES. VORSTER UNDERLINED THAT HIS INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION REQUIRED THAT HE DEMONSTRATE TO SOUTH AFRICANS THAT VIOLENCE IN RHODESIA HAD IN FACT CEASED BEFORE ANY WITHDRAWAL OCCUR. MR. HOLDER INTERVENED AT THIS POINT TO SUPPORT TOLBERT'S STATEMENT. HE SAID HE FELT VORSTER WAS SINCERE ON THIS POINT.

5. WITH RESPECT TO NAMIBIA, TOLBERT SAID VORSTER AGREED THAT NAMIBIA SHOULD BE FREE AND INDEPENDENT, BUT INSISTED THROUGHOUT THAT NAMIBIANS THEMSELVES MUST DECIDE WHO WAS TO GOVERN, THE TRANSITION PERIOD, ETC. ETC. THERE ALSO OBVIOUSLY EXISTS A LARGE DEGREE OF PERSONAL ANIMOSITY BETWEEN VORSTER AND SAM NOJOMO, HEAD OF SWAPO. VORSTER DOES NOT BELIEVE NOJOMO IS QUALIFIED TO SPEAK FOR ALL NAMIBIANS. ACCORDING TO TOLBERT, VORSTER SAID THAT IN ORDER TO SPEED UP THE ESSENTIAL POLITICAL CONSULTATION AMONG NAMIBIANS CONCERNING TIME AND PACE OF INDEPENDENCE, VORSTER OFFERED TO ASSIST IN DISPATCHING A REPRESENTATIVE

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SENTATIVE DELEGATION FROM NAMIBIA TO MONROVIA IN ORDER TO CONSULT WITH TOLBERT AND HIS COUNSELORS. VORSTER SAID EVEN SOME WHITES MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN THE DELEGATION. TOLBERT SAID HE WAS CONSIDERING THIS POSSIBILITY. HE ADDED THAT THIS THOUGHT ON VORSTER'S PART COINCIDED WITH VIEWS OF KENNETH KAUNDA OF ZAMBIA. HE THEN LET ME READ A LETTER FROM KAUNDA SENT AFTER DEPARTURE OF FONMIN DENNIS WHICH WAS MOST FULSOME IN ITS SUPPORT OF TOLBERT'S INITIATIVE AND PROMISING TOLBERT FULL

SUPPORT. KAUNDA WENT ON TO SUGGEST THAT THE NEXT STEP WAS TO TRY TO GET THE NAMIBIANS TOGETHER TO FORM SOME SORT OF CONSENSUS AND THUS TO FORCE THE PACE A LITTLE ON MOVEMENT TOWARD INDEPENDENCE.

6. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION TOLBERT SAID THAT HE WAS NOT OPPOSED IN PRINCIPLE TO MAKING A RETURN VISIT TO SA FOR ANOTHER MEETING WITH VORSTER PROVIDED TWO PRIOR CONDITIONS WERE MET: (A) THAT THE RESULT OF HIS SOUNDINGS AMONG OTHER AFRICAN LEADERS SHOWED GENERAL SUPPORT FOR HIS INITIATIVE AND (B) VORSTER TAKES SOME CONCRETE PUBLIC STEPS (SUCH AS RELEASE OF PRISONERS IN SA, WITHDRAWAL OF POLICE FROM RHODESIA, ETC.) TO PUBLICLY DEMONSTRATE THAT THE FIRST TOLBERT/VORSTER MEETING HAD PRODUCED SOME CONCRETE RESULTS. TOLBERT SAID HE WOULD NOT MEET WITH VORSTER IN SA SOLELY TO PROVIDE A SENSE OF MOMENTUM TOWARD DIALOGUE WHERE NONE EXISTS -- CONCRETE IMPROVEMENT IN SOME ASPECTS OF SOUTH AFRICAN BEHAVIOR WAS AN ESSENTIAL PRE-CONDITION FOR THE SECOND MEETING.

7. CONCERNING THE RESULTS OF SOUNDING WITH OTHER AFRICAN LEADERS THROUGH VISITS BY FONMIN DENNIS AND HIS PERSONAL MESSAGES TO HEADS OF STATES, TOLBERT SAID SOUNDING TO DATE HAD BEEN ON THE WHOLE MOST FAVORABLE TO HIS INITIATIVE. NONE OF HIS AFRICAN COLLEAGUES HAD QUESTIONED HIS SINCERITY IN MAKING AN OVERTURE TO VORSTER, NOR HAD THEY QUESTIONED THE TIMING OF HIS INITIATIVE. A FEW, SUCH AS SEKOU TOURE, WERE FUNDAMENTALLY OPPOSED TO DIALOGUE IN ANY EVENT. TOLBERT SAID HE HAD KNOWN IN ADVANCE THAT HE WOULD GET LITTLE OR NO SUPPORT FROM THE ARAB COUNTRIES OR FROM THOSE WITH A RADICAL SOCIALIST BENT. HE SAID THE ARABS TEND TO LUMP SA WITH ALL OTHER SUPPORTERS OF ISRAEL AND THEREFORE UNWORTHY OF DIALOGUE. HE SAID THAT HE HAD AN UNDERSTANDING WITH SEKOU TOURE TO SIMPLY AGREE TO DISAGREE ON MANY ISSUES. HIS CURRENT INITIATIVE DEFINITELY FALLS INTO THIS

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CATEGORY AND HE HAD MERELY EXPLAINED HIS REASONS FOR MEETING VORSTER TO THE GUINEAN DELEGATION NOW IN MONROVIA WITH NO APOLOGIES. REGARDING THE RECENT NIGERIAN PRESS RELEASES ON GOWON'S POSITION (LAGOS 1870), TOLBERT SAID THAT ONE HAD TO REALIZE CERTAIN CHIEFS OF STATE LIKE TO BE CONSULTED WELL IN ADVANCE AND HAVE ACTIONS FLOW THROUGH THEM. THIS CONSULTATION HAD NOT TAKEN PLACE WITH GOWON AND HE FELT GOWON WOULD DO HIS USUAL BALANCING ACT UNTIL RESPONSES OF OTHER AFRICAN LEADERS BECAME MORE CLEAR.

8. WHEN TOLBERT INQUIRED AS TO THE US VIEWS ON HIS ACTIONS, I REPLIED THAT I HAD RECEIVED NO SPECIFIC SUMMARY OR INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING US POSITION BUT THOUGHT HIS ACTION CERTAINLY FELL WITHIN THE BROAD FRAMEWORK OF US POLICIES ON SOUTH AFRICAN ISSUES. I OUTLINED THE ELEMENTS OF OUR POLICIES AND EMPHASIZED

US EFFORTS BOTH WITHIN SA ITSELF AND ON THE INTERNATIONAL PLANE TO BRING THE MAXIMUM PRESSURE OF OPINION FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE IN THE APARTHEID POLICY AND ALL OF ITS RAMIFICATIONS. I OPINED THAT TOLBERT SHOULD NOT EXPECT A DEFINITIVE US PUBLIC STANCE ON HIS INITIATIVE OR A SERIES OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON DEVELOPMENTS AS DIALOGUE PROGRESSES. AT THIS STAGE, US IS NOT COMPELLED AND IN FACT IT MIGHT BE WISER IF US DID NOT RUSH INTO PRINT. TOLBERT SAID HE FULLY APPRECIATED THIS BUT URGED THAT WE NEVERTHELESS CONVEY TO HIM IN PRIVATE RPT PRIVATE US VIEWS ON DEVELOPMENTS AND PARTICULARLY ON THINGS WE FELT HE MIGHT DO TO MOVE DIALOGUE ALONG. HE REPEATED THAT HE FELT THAT THE COULD BE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE TO US IN AFRICA AND WOULD WELCOME THE FULLEST AND FRANKEST EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS.

9. IT WAS IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT THAT HE LET ME READ THE TEXT OF HIS LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD DATED FEBRUARY 24, CONCERNING THE GENERAL FEELING OF AFRICAN LEADERS THAT THE US IS NEGLECTING THE AFRICAN CONTINENT AND COMMENTING ADVERSELY ON THE NOMINATION OF AMBASSADOR DAVIS TO BE ASST. SECRETARY FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS. ON THIS LATTER POINT I SUMMARIZED FOR HIM THE KEY POINTS FROM THE SECRETARY'S LETTER TO THE OAU ON THE DAVIS APPOINTMENT. TOLBERT SAID HE UNDERSTOOD OUR POSITION COMPLETELY BUT FELT IN THE SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP AND OF FRANKNESS HESHOULD CONVEY TO PRESIDENT FORD FROM TIME TO TIME HIS ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN ATTITUDES AS THEY AFFECT US POLICIES
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AND ACTIONS IN AFRICA. I SAID I WAS CONFIDENT THAT PRESIDENT FORD WOULD RECEIVE HIS COMMENTS IN THIS SPIRIT.

10. IN CLOSING TOLBERT REITERATED THAT HE WOULD KEEP US CLOSELY ADVISED IN THE FUTURE ON DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING DIALOGUE WITH SA AND ON OTHER KEY ISSUES IN WHICH WE HAD A COMMON INTEREST AND HE URGED THAT WE RECIPROCATE.
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